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Harding School of Theology

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Footnotes: Re-Open

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Footnotes¹

¹Curated Resources for Ministers



May 13, 2020

Hey Friends,

Will anyone come? What about money? What about our neighbors? Churches are asking these questions. In the same way that every business is now a startup, every congregation is now a church plant. Lots of questions.

I'm optimistic in this moment, as churches are able to reimagine the future. Our future is bright.

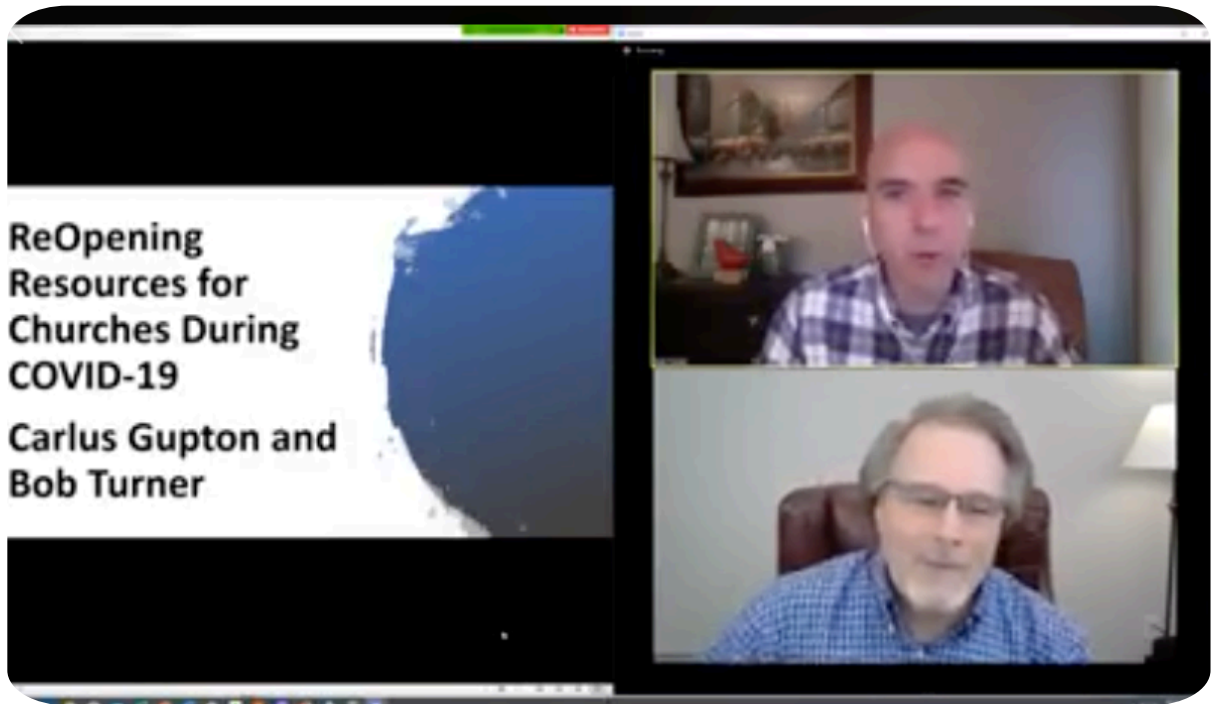
But it's worth remembering that just 3-4 months ago many of us were lamenting our really grim future: church attendance decline, tanking enrollments at Christian colleges, and budget cuts for congregations because of erratic giving patterns. Let's not rush our return to normalcy if it means a return to mediocrity. We're going to need to be creative as we imagine a better future. Today I'll spend some time on that future. I talk about it in my really long interview with Carlus Gupton.

Also:

- Russ Turman on video production,
- My trip to Dallas to study English Bibles,
- A Few More Footnotes.



When Should We Reopen?



Gupton and Turner go for over an hour....

Creative Arts in Churches



My conversation with Russ Turman, Media Minister at
Highland Church of Christ in Memphis.

Russ's work is absolutely phenomenal.

Bibles Before King James (Part One)

The story of the English Bible has often been told as if there is one starting point: the publication of the King James Bible in 1611. Of course, that is not the case. And there were many English Bibles, not just one. And the King James Bible wasn't even the preferred version of restorationists like Alexander Campbell. You have probably heard all of this before. In fact, many of you reading a newsletter from Harding School of Theology might hear tales of the English Bible in the distinct voice of Jack P. Lewis (1919-2018), who cemented his place among the world's foremost scholars on the topic with his publication of *The English Bible, From KJV to NIV* (Baker, 1981). That volume is classic Lewis: meticulous, thorough, and timely. We cannot know, however, how much Lewis was able to interact with the rarest copies of the earliest English Bibles. These volumes are not held by the Graves Memorial Library, nor are they in Lewis's personal collection (we can rightly assume he didn't splurge on many rare books). His research on these Bibles would have required travel to libraries and museums that owned them or dependence on facsimiles.

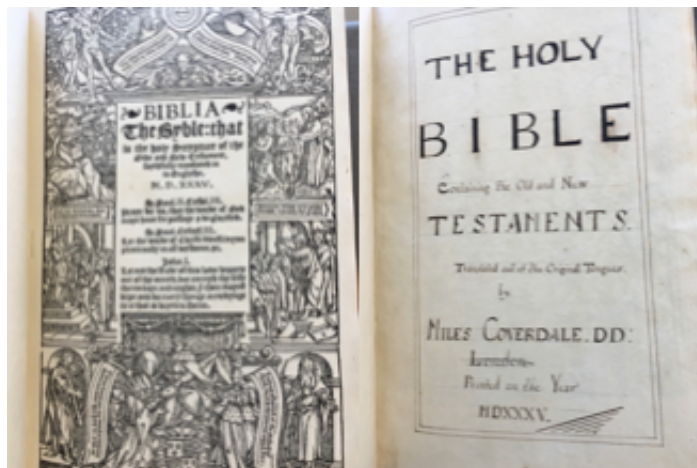
In the summer of 2019 I was awarded a Bridwell Library Fellowship to study English Bibles, particularly those that predate 1611. I spent a week reading at Southern Methodist University, walking around pristine Highland Park, sweating through rides on the DART, downing too many americanos at Le Madeleine, and chatting up fellow onlookers at Ross Perot's funeral.

As early as the 1380s, John Wycliffe was translating the Bible into Middle English. For allusions to the Bible in Early Modern English, we might start with Thomas Beston's translation of The Lord's Prayer into English in 1500 (*A Ryght Profytable Treatyse*). While writers of that era were hesitant to translate the Bible (preferring to leave it in Latin), they sometimes made exceptions, such as those who put other notable texts like the Ten Commandments (Wynkyn de Worde, *The Ordinary of Christian Men*, 1506) or the story of the virtuous

woman in Proverbs 31 (Henry Pepwell, *The Cyte of Ladyes*) into the new tongue.

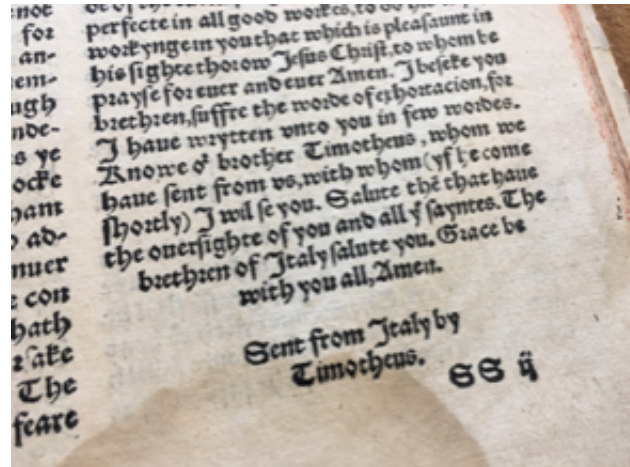
Efforts to print the English Bible on its own and not as a part of another work begin with William Tyndale's 1526 New Testament. Only two of the 3,000 original copies survive (Baptist College Library, Bristol and St. Paul's Cathedral Library). The legacy of Tyndale's work was apparent not only in its time, but also when subsequent translators assumed its accuracy for generations---the 1881 Revised Version retained 80% of Tyndale's exact wording.

The greatness of the Tyndale New Testament hardly dissuaded others from taking their best shot. George Joye published his translation of the Psalms in 1530, while William Tyndale's translation of the Pentateuch arrived in 1530. Joye's rendering of Proverbs and Ecclesiastes appeared as early as 1534. It seems as if that is the point when the blitz truly begins. In 1535, the Cambridge-educated Miles Coverdale published *Biblia. The Bible that is, the Holy Scripture of the Olde and New Testament, Faithfully and Truly Translated out of Douche and Latyn in to Englishe* (Marburg: Eucharius Cervicornus and Johannes Soter?).

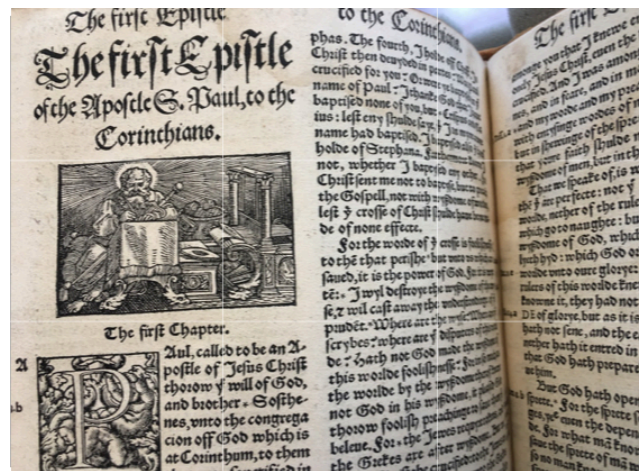


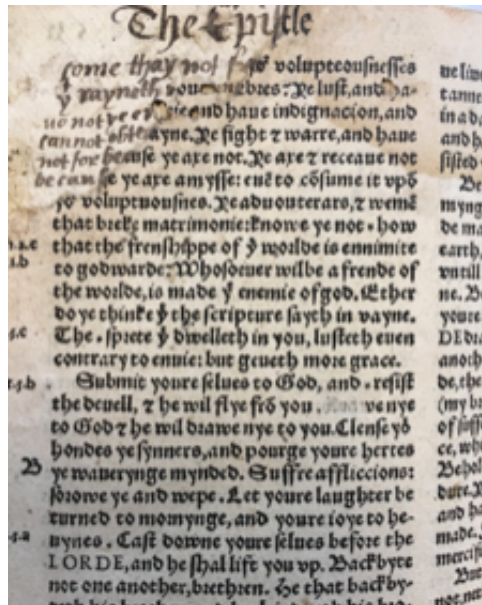
The translation is remembered for being the first full Bible in English. One might not guess that the first word of the introduction to the first full Bible in English would be the name "Caiaphas." Like other traditions of its time, it combines Ezra-Nehemiah into 1-2 Ezra. The order of James and the Johannine Letters are swapped. Scholarship has certainly moved a bit on authorship

issues, as Coverdale attempts to locate the provenance of some of the Epistles, with 2 Thessalonians being sent from Athens, 1 Timothy from Laodicea, 2 Corinthians from Philippi in Macedonia, and Hebrews from Italy (which elsewhere he designates as Rome).



It also includes decorative initials (still with a disproportionate number of sea creatures), as well as illustrations to situate the content of the letter.





I'll review some more Bibles and thoughts on my studies last summer in an upcoming issue.



A Few More Footnotes

1. [Big mistakes](#) for churches coming back together.
2. [Things white people can do for racial justice](#). Practical ideas.
3. Mark Bauerlein on "[Our Bookless Future](#)."
4. Some really nice pieces of work by HST students [are now available](#).



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UPCOMING
May 25
The Classics

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